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Faculty orientation usually provides only information on the college's programs; even this modest goal is rarely met. The author looks at orientation as a process of socialization--acquiring attitudes, values, skills, and appropriate social behavior. Besides department and course objectives, college and instructional goals, student characteristics, administrative procedures, etc., the new faculty member wants to know the norms assigned to his role and expected by his group in this subsystem of higher education. A faculty recruited from so many backgrounds tests the college's ability to correct deficiencies or to delete or change values contrary to its image. To do this, the college must make its norms known, provide both rationale and motive for any change, and confine its concern to students, college, and community. Values are ranked as: primary--those the college must impress on new members; secondary, not shared by all the staff, perhaps even contentious; tertiary, possibly antithetical, certainly without general support. Factors shaping these values are: group interaction, a ranking member of the system, continual reinforcement and support of the value, encouragement rather than mandate, exposure of both sides of the issue, arousal and satisfaction of a need, points of agreement rather than difference, and credibility of information source (whether peer group or superior). Essential to success of the process, of course, is cooperation of incumbent faculty. (HH)

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VIEWING FACULTY

ORIENTATION AS A SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

John J. Connolly

"In most colleges the number of new professors will represent a significant portion of the faculty. The effectiveness with which these new teachers are selected and inducted into their new positions will, in large measure, determine the quality of the educational programs in colleges for the years that lie ahead."[1] B.Lamar Johnson spoke these words over twenty years ago, and neither the situation he describes, nor our attempts at solving it, have evolved greatly during that period. We are confronted today, as we have been since the initial formation of the structure that we know as colleges and universities, with the problem of attracting and "inducting," as it were, new faculty. The genesis of collegiate education has demonstrated rapid and sophisticated developments in many areas; however, our personnel policies still remain fixated in the infancy stage. The reasons for this fixation are many, but primary among those we might list has been our reluctance to devote the necessary resources in time, mental and physical energy, and personnel to designing effective orientation and faculty development programs. The not-so-simple mechanics of each fall semester seem to constantly overwhelm us!

Another reason why we have failed in this task, and it is perhaps merely a scion of the first, is the fact that we have not yet approached faculty orientations with any kind of theoretical framework. Heretofore,

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we have concentrated solely on the informational aspects of our programs to the neglect of all other objectives. Sadly, we have seldom fulfilled even the modest ambition of providing adequate information. Yet, in orienting students we have used the most potent techniques and resources at our command; at the same time, we have denied equal energy and resources to the orientation of new faculty - persons whose adjustment, or lack thereof, has the potential of affecting not one, but hundreds of students.

The purpose of this paper is not to offer an orientation design that will be an instant panacea, but instead to propose a theoretical framework which will either increase the efficacy of our present designs or stimulate the development of new ones.

The theoretical framework which I shall attempt to apply to the faculty orientation is one which is based upon the concept of orientation as a socialization process. The model of orientation as socialization is merely one of many possible models which might be utilized as a basis for a program. It does have a validity, however, in that our true goals for orientations are usually, neither by intent nor design, synonymous with the process of socialization -- which, as defined by Robert K. Merton, "involves the acquisition of attitudes and values, of skills and behavior patterns making up social roles as established in the social structure."[2]

To many, the extent and implications of this definition, and in fact this proposal, may seem exaggerated when applied to our own situations. But, in these years when our institutions are experiencing rapid growth,

both in the number and size of institutions, and in the number and variety of faculty, the means may not be disproportionate to the ends.

The expressed desire for such programs on the part of faculty has been demonstrated by Norbert Tracy and Robert O. Stripling among others. Tracy surveyed the kinds of information new faculty wanted and found large groups desirous of such <u>incidental</u> information as the objectives of their department, the objectives and content of courses they were going to teach, the goals of the college and problems in meeting them and the types of students enrolled in the college.[3] Stripling, in an unpublished doctoral thesis at Teacher's College, Columbia University, specified 50 areas of difficulty for new faculty members. Among those he identified were understanding grading policies and evaluation of students.[4] Even more recently, Roger Garrison's study of junior college faculty reiterates the findings of Stripling and Tracy. In summizing the reactions of faculty during interviews, Garrison states:

"Though the new staff member could be considered properly prepared in his own discipline, he was, more often than not, only vaguely informed about the nature of the comprehensive junior college, its general mission, and the specific aims of the institution which employed him. He needed more than a casual briefing on teaching policies and practices at his new college. He needed a fairly thorough introduction to typical problems of instruction posed by the kinds of students he could expect to work with. Some means or device, in short, is clearly desirable to help the new faculty member swiftly and effectively to become an integrated member of a cohesive teaching staff."[5]

Ray Maul, in an article entitled, "The Biggest Problem: Finding Good College Teachers"[6] delineates some unique aspects of this dilemma. In his survey of the field, Maul identified fourteen different sources of college faculty. It would certainly be presumptuous to assume that so varied a group would have a clear concept of the goals and purposes of a college, especially since it is probable that only one in four would have had previous college experience of any kind.

Despite the obvious demand, Stripling's 1950 survey showed that only 27.6 per cent of colleges had an orientation program. Tracy's 1961 study showed a growing recognition of the necessity of the programs, however, as fifty-three per cent of his sample held "special meetings" before each term. The duration of most of these programs was merely one or two days and seldom dealt with more than administrative procedures.

The reasons for the existence of this critical situation are not difficult to ascertain. We typically approach our orientation programs with little more than vague theoretical concepts and relatively undefined program goals. We realize that we must somehow communicate to new faculty, usually in a day or two, basic administrative procedures, institutional policy, institutional goals, student characteristics, and a myriad of other fundamental and necessary information. We tend, because of our truncated sessions, to talk at, rather than with people. We sometimes attempt to overwhelm faculty with visiting authorities. In general, we totally ignore sound and basic principles of effective communications and, most importantly, fail to realize what we are really attempting is a condensation and hastening of the process of socialization.

A somewhat broadened and adulterated view of Merton's definition might consider socialization as a process by which an individual acquires the norms, attitudes, and values which enable him to perform satisfactorily in a specific role(s) assigned to him by an organization. The parameters of his role are established by the society (in this case, a sub-system of society) but usually allow the individual some interpretation. In viewing each college as a societal sub-system -- in reality one aspect of a sub-system containing all colleges and universities -- we may then rightly assume that certain norms, values, and attitudes are appropriate to given roles within that sub-system.

Socialization takes place whenever an individual is new to a system. In society at large socialization is usually considered as being limited to children and as a process carried on primarily by parents. The organizational sub-system differs significantly only in that socialization is often an adult process, and that rather than being carried on by parents, it is carried on by a different set of "significant others" (i.e. boss, peers). It also differs in that while it is many times a one-to-one process in childhood, the form of social interaction utilized for socialization within organizations is usually the collective, or group process. In fact, it is not only collective in the sense that more than one individual interacts with another at a given moment, but also in the sense that more than one individual at a time is being socialized.

The problem is that traditionally the socialization process of the college or university have proven ineffective or incomplete and that goals, roles, values, attitudes, etc. have not been effectively communicated, if at all. To further complicate the issue, in socializing college

faculty we are rarely starting with a tabula rasa but are instead re-socializing many individuals. The wide variety of past experiences possessed by college faculty and their recent emigration from previous systems (graduate school, government, industry, other colleges) presents a heterogeneous population and a real test of an organization's ability to maintain a distinct identity. Re-socialization may correct deficiencies in previous socialization processes or may delete or change previously held values and attitudes which are contradictory to those of the new system.

To accomplish these goals we must not only concern ourselves with the content of the socialization, but with the process as well. It is primarily the process and not the content which will, hopefully, alter previously held attitudes -- our most significant obstacle to successful organizational adaptation.

Stanton Wheeler in as essay entitled, "The Structure of Formally Organized Socialization Settings,"[7] offers the following, "Framework for Analysis of Socialization in Organizations."

Framework for Analysis of Socialization in Organizations

		Intervening Mechanisms		
		Organizational	Individual	
Independent Variables →	Norms	Capacity to present clear norms	Capacity to learn the norms	→ Socialization Outcomes
	Performances	Capacity to provide performance opportunities	Capacity to perform	
	Rewards, Sanctions, Motives	Capacity to selectively reward performance	Motivation to perform	

(Brimm and Wheeler)

There are three steps which the socializing agency must follow to effect the socialization process:

1. Make the new norms known
2. Provide the necessary rationale for change
3. Provide motivation for change

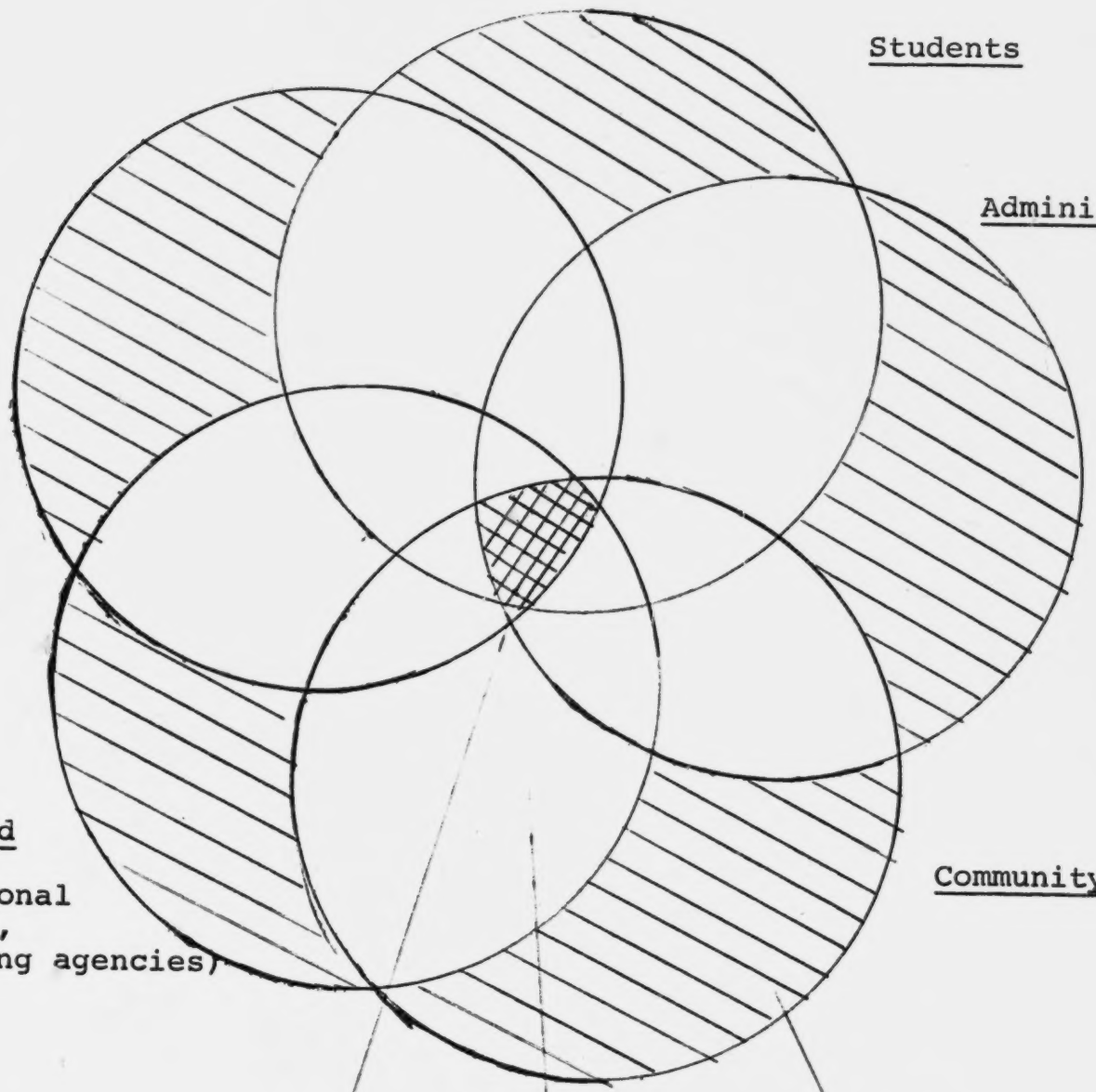
The first of these three objectives may appear rather easily accomplished, but is in fact, the most difficult.

Defining institutional values mandates the often painful, but healthy, process of institutional introspection. Also, in communicating these values the organization must consider the relevance of the basic information and rationale upon which those values have been created. Lastly, there must be an orderly and logical progression from information, to rationale, to values. Not a simple task!

There are, obviously, many difficulties inherent in this procedure. Consensus may well be achieved on the kinds of information to be communicated, but it is doubtful that it is attainable in defining values. Rather than seek consensus, then, we should aim for the more accessible objective of delineating a limited number of basic values which we feel are absolutely necessary for a successful adjustment both within the institution and to the goals of the institution. These may be very few in number and will necessarily vary immensely from institution to institution; hence, it would be presumptuous to list any here. Three areas of institutional concern -- students, college, and community -- may serve as attitudinal and informational "objects." These can provide a focus for the structuring of the orientation and the final goals of the process should be defined in terms related to each of these three areas.

The following diagram graphically demonstrated the problem of intra-institutional value definition and consensus. This chart may be viewed as representing inter- or intra-institutional value patterns.

Institutional Value System



Primary (necessary) values & attitudes

Secondary values & attitudes (some agreement between forces)

Tertiary (peripheral) values & attitudes (little or no support within the organization

In this diagram I have indicated three classes of values and attitudes. The primary (i.e. necessary) are those which we must define and communicate to a new member of the system. These are consensual attitudes which are fundamental to the organization and are universal throughout that organization. They are most necessary for maintaining the identity and continuous functioning of that organization. Any member(s) of the organization not sharing these would, in all probability, be a dysfunctional member(s) of the system.

The secondary class of values and attitudes are not shared by all members of an organization. These are often topics of contention and, depending upon the specific attitude or value concerned, create great flux in the balance of our diagram and in institutional consensus.

The tertiary, or peripheral, attitudes and values are those which may be held by members of the organization, but which are usually suppressed because of their antithetical nature and because they receive little or no support from other individuals or groups.

I am not here suggesting that college faculty members must adhere to a total and specific value pattern. What I am suggesting is that if the attitudinal pattern of an individual (or group) does not correlate somewhat with the institutional configuration, internecine stress will occur and neither the individual nor the institution will achieve their respective goals. Attitudes are rather vague hypothetical constructs and it is difficult to precisely define or measure them. What we should work towards is a modicum of agreement -- a dynamic equilibrium -- between individual and institution that will allow the needs and goals of each to

be satisfied within the same context.

The third step, that of providing the motivation for change, poses a different kind of problem. Individuals change attitudes and values for one basic motive -- because their current attitudes and values do not serve them adequately in their present situation. The reasons why currently held values and attitudes may prove untenable are many, ranging from group pressures to a conflict with other values and attitudes held by the individual, or, conflict with the behavior of the individual. The organization eventually provides the motivation and the information necessary for value change, but if we are consciously attempting to alter current values and attitudes within a brief period we should try to enhance the possibility of an early occurrence. It is possible to at least begin this process during an orientation. As mentioned, the motivation for change may emanate from many sources. The sources of information, of new norms, and of support for change may be equally diverse, and yet some of them may at the same time provide the motivation. For instance, an effective department chairman would provide each of these during the initial periods of an individual's employment.

In the following paragraphs I will indicate some basic principles which have been shown to be associated with the socialization process, effective communications, and attitude and value change. Following each principle is an example of its potential application in an orientation program.

Groups tend to have a centralizing or conforming nature. Therefore, much of any orientation should be devoted to group interaction. Most groups should contain both incumbent and new faculty. The incumbent

faculty would be the mechanism for communicating the institutional norms and the total group would offer support for change. Motivation for change would occur when an individual observed that a specific norm he held was not consistent with that held by the group. An individual could then either suppress the expression of his feelings, or, during the ensuing discussion, he would become aware of the information and rationale supporting the group and institutional norm and, hopefully, adopt it. A case study approach is an extremely effective technique for manifesting the expression of a variety of attitudes and values and for prompting verbal and ideological exchange.

Although our present orientations are of a group nature, they are so only in the sense that someone is addressing a group of individuals. We do not structure our programs so that the dynamics of group interaction can readily evolve. Hence, we lose any possible value of the group situation.

A typical reference point for any new member of a system is an experienced and ranking member of a system. Therefore, a sound technique is to "team" old and new faculty. The old faculty not only offer a successful model for identification, but are again an excellent source of information. Recent research[8] has also shown that a "sponsor relationship" is created in this fashion. This type of relationship instills in the new member an obligation to succeed and to fulfill the role model provided by the sponsor. The department chairman, whether he is conscious of the fact or not, is probably the most typical model. Perhaps a conscious realization of the ubiquitous nature of the identification process

will stimulate persons to provide better models.

Any change that may take place, to become permanent, must be supported by the group or a singularly significant individual. Although immediate reinforcement may take place within the group, to be effective, the support must be frequent and continual. Faculty leaders and administration should be one mechanism for such reinforcement.

Encouraging change is far better than attempting to force change. Forcing attitude change will more likely than not result in a firmer adherence to the currently held attitudes. If it does not accomplish this, it will at least create a defensiveness which may impair the socialization of the new member. As any good pedagogue should know, negative reinforcement often elucidates negative results. In attitude change, satisfaction with a newly acquired attitude has been demonstrated to be inversely related to the amount of coercion exerted. Inducing compliance by threat -- either overt or implied -- is a technique not uncommonly resorted to after all else has failed. At this point, however, there is very little hope for any positive change -- change which may have readily occurred at an earlier point in time, under proper conditions, and with positive stimulation.

It is better to present both sides of any issue: and it is many times, but not always, better to present that which is advocated first. The "pro-con" order is also superior to the "con-pro" order of presentation.

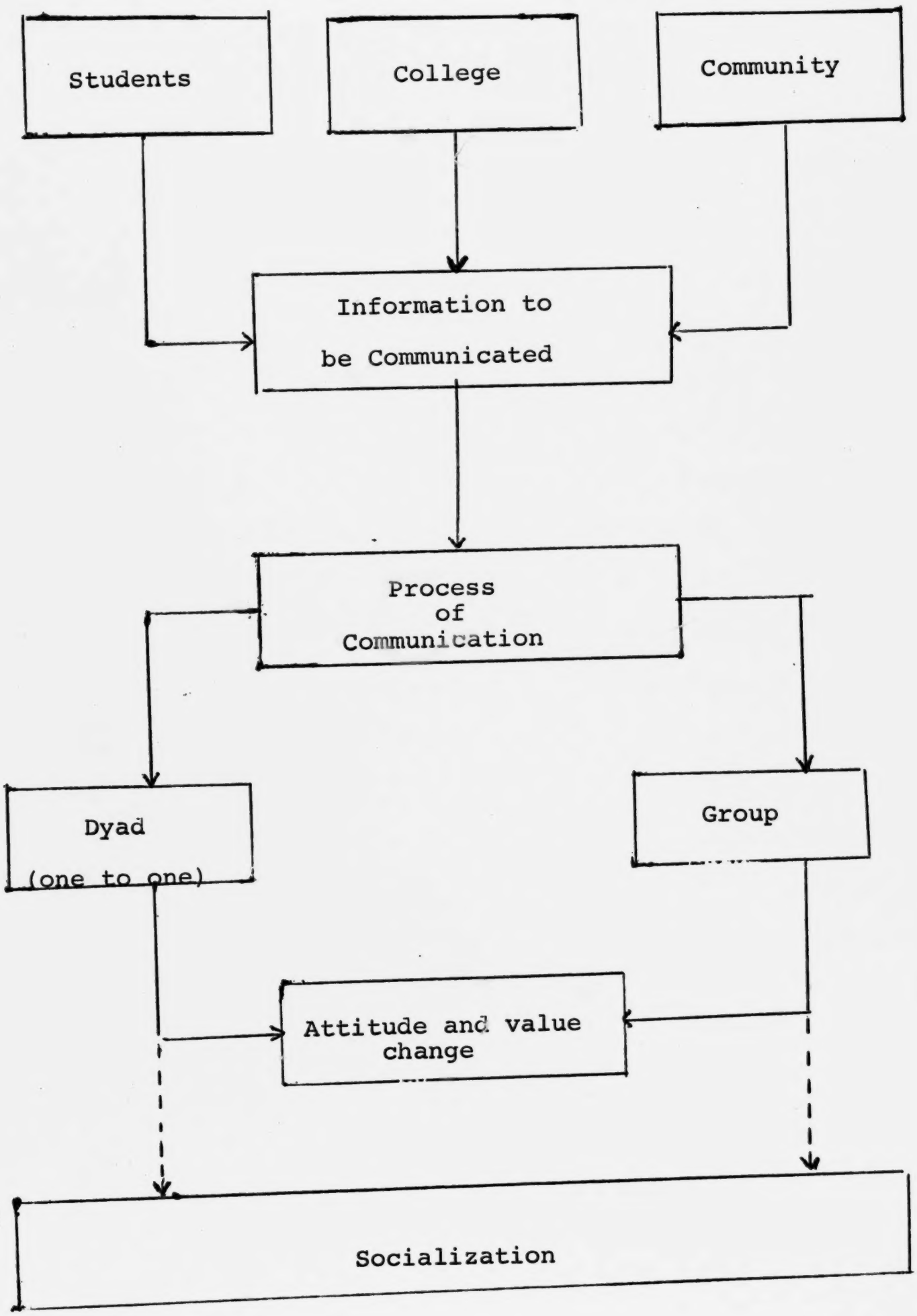
Arousing the subjects needs and then presenting information that satisfies those needs will tend to increase the acceptability of the message. For example, presenting new faculty with information regarding referral

sources within the college and the community will probably have little meaning unless they can relate it to their own situation. In this instance, we might first present some case study material gleaned from faculty advisor records that would demonstrate the relevance and necessity of such knowledge.

Effective communication usually takes place better from points of agreement than from points of disagreement. It is advisable, therefore, to initially present concepts and information which do not radically challenge present values and attitudes that may be held by new members. Presenting radical concepts (relatively speaking) can have a very negative effect -- how many new faculty have suddenly asked themselves, "What the hell have I gotten myself into?" This situation would also indicate an inadequate employment procedure - one in which the institution did not accuragely present its own image.

The source of communication can be as important as the content. A source of high credibility is more effective than a source with low credibility. Two approaches can be utilized to deal with this factor: (a) information can be received from peer groups, or (b) information can emanate from authority. Both methods may be utilized independently or to reinforce each other. However, there is ample reason to believe that the former, if it can be implemented, would be more effective.

If we utilized the various theories and principles thus far discussed, a flow chart of the orientation process would appear as follows:


Students
College
Community
Information to be Communicated
Process of Communication
Dyad (one to one)
Group
Attitude and value change
Socialization

Verbally stated, this type of orientation would concentrate on information and attitudes relating to three primary object areas: the students, the community and the institution. The process of communication would be regarded as equal in importance to the content. Dyads (one-to-one relationships) and groups would be utilized not only as communicators of information, but also as motivators and reinforcers of change. The change desired would be primarily normative, with reference to our previously stated object areas. The end product of this process would be a "socialized individual."

There are, however, a number of cautions of which we should be cognizant. Foremost is the fact the socialization is an on-going and never-ending process. Individuals will seldom completely adapt to an organizational system within a week or less - our usually orientation period. Implied in the continuing nature of socialization is the charge for a planned process. The kind of orientation process suggested here should merely be the first step in a well designed faculty development plan. Also, we should remember that the "social" aspects of any organizational setting are at least as important in socialization as the formal program. This concept could be extended to include the spouse -- who is often the more status conscious, and who probably has a more traditional conception of college. Both of these factors can be impediments to satisfactory adjustment to an academic setting.

We should always bear in mind the fact that conformity has its negative effects. We are certainly not seeking, I trust, total conformity within an organization, but rather some acceptance of fundamental educational

philosophy which marks the contemporary college as a unique institution in society today and allows it the acceptance, flexibility, and ability to innovate which it currently enjoys. We must also remember that many organizations, particularly colleges, function extremely well with considerable deviance. The purpose of this process is not to eliminate individuality, but to establish the social reality of a college environment.

We should also recognize that despite the trend of conformity in any group or institutional setting, changes in attitudes do not necessarily result in changes in behavior. Most frequently both changes occur concurrently, however, there are occasional exceptions.

In formulating our orientation designs we should attempt to involve faculty as greatly as possible. This is often difficult because most plans are conceived during the summer months. Yet, to consider orienting new faculty without the cooperation and involvement of incumbent faculty is ludicrous. The current faculty will be the primary agents of socialization, and their effectiveness will probably be in direct proportion to their involvement.

Evaluation procedures should be incorporated in orientation plans at the very inception. Although most of our institutions share the common fault of not thoroughly evaluating what we do, new programs, whether they be of academic or non-academic nature, will never truly mature unless we evaluate always, and revise when necessary. There are at least three means by which we might evaluate our orientation programs: (1) by attitudinal change, either perceived or measured; (2) by letting the participants evaluate the program -- either immediately and/or at a later date;

(3) by evaluating the functioning of the individuals in their roles (the most problematic of the three). Each of these has its pratfalls, but at least each would provide some feedback for our socialization system. We should accept the verity of the axiom that organizations - in fact groups of any nature - socialize all of their members. We are merely attempting a condensation of the process.

The choice is a simple one. We may continue our inadequate efforts and allow people to fail the system and the system to fail people because neither understood the other. We can create expectations of socialization, but never implement a plan to achieve the goal. We can continue relegating people to months of endless searching for equivocal guidance and leadership, and then evaluate them on that which they never found. And we can continue believing that once a person knows where to park his car, meets his classes regularly, and creates no visible problems, he has been assimilated and is an integral and functioning part of our organization.

Or, we can begin utilizing the intellectual and monetary resources at our control and devise rational plans for incorporating individuals into a system - a process that must and will occur, despite any emotional and intellectual resistance to recognizing the fact.

FOOTNOTES

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